

New Fiction

Continued from Page Seventeen.

right into the late war, with almost all the known varieties of the troubles that come to the hero and heroine of a thorough-going modern romance of adventure.

It is a very well done yarn, really vivacious, and in addition to an abundance of happy invention, skillful use of familiar machinery of plot and excellent local color, Mrs. Oemler has a fresh cheerfulness, a gaiety of spirit that warms the narrative. Her young men are particularly good, and the girl will do well enough. The story is well humanized melodrama, kept sweet by its humor.

TOLD UNDER A WHITE OAK TREE. By Bill Hart's Pinto Pony; edited by his master, William S. Hart. Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg. Houghton Mifflin Company.

THIS will be attractive to the millions of movie fans and to animal lovers of all sorts; it is also noteworthy as a fine specimen of Mr. Flagg's art. Indeed, the eight illustrations show Mr. Flagg at his best, and exhibit an understanding of mass and line and proportion that his pen and ink work cannot match. The

drawings are remarkable as studies of the horse in action. The story itself is told in the familiar form of animal slang, as interpreted by the famous pony's equally famous owner. It tells exciting inside facts of the life of movie-land, including some genuinely hairbreadth escapes of pony and rider. The book is handsomely made, and may be recommended as a gift volume, being both intrinsically interesting and a beautiful volume of its kind.

ACCORDING TO HER LIGHT. By M. Cumming Dana. Philadelphia: Dorrance.

THIS is belligerently labeled as "a war book" giving the woman's point of view—that of the mother who stays at home but suffers. It also involves an unhappy marriage, the pursuit of the lady by a very heavy villain with the odd name of Count Vondhoff, a rescue by the noble lover and an exit by a comfortable poison which produces a slow euthanasia for the heroine. There is a good deal of high flying rhetoric about woman suffrage, the "cause" and high sounding near-philosophy. It is a very well meant book, its lesson being that "if we ever achieve a good and universal peace it will come through the illumination, courage, sacrifice of women."

Taft as a Host

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with the band, went to the foot of the main stairway and sounded a call, announcing the appearance of the President and Mrs. Taft, who were met at the foot of the stairway and escorted to our parlor by a military and a naval aid, who accompanied them along the line of guests, introducing the President and Mrs. Taft to each. This ceremony concluded, Mrs. Taft was escorted out by the aids, the President gave his arm to the guest of honor, we followed, two by two, the band "playing us in" to the state dining room. The waiters were the usual mulattoes trained by a martinet; the flowers, the lights, the wines, the viands, the silver and china, the music were each perfect in kind. The conversational key was pitched at once by the President, who directed a quizzical remark to a guest who had had a hard row to hoe in the Senate that day. I mention the fact because with all the delightful appointments the dinner could, under easily imaginable circumstances, have been but a dull thing, but the skillfully thrown cue of the host was responded to in kind, and what could have been a tedious, bumpy hour was that cheerful one whose end is always a surprise—it comes so soon.

After another small "stag" dinner at the White House President Taft invited us out to the roof of the eastern extension, where a band was playing and where small tables were set for coffee. The guests grouped about the tables, and during the evening Mr. Taft visited each group, engaging in

any topic under discussion and making occasion to speak to each about what was interesting each in Senate, House, Army, Navy or administrative work. What made Mr. Taft's renown as a host is, I think, that he does these things not with studied purpose but because he enjoys doing them.

I must speak of a Taft garden party, voted to be the prettiest social affair in any remembered Administration. It was on a June evening, the grounds south of the White House were picturesquely aglow, fountains played in shafts of colored searchlights, a choral society sang, the Marine Band's selections were appropriate for such a perfect night; diplomats strolled about, the fronts of their uniforms hidden by gold lace and the ribbons and medals of orders; women were in their prettiest dresses and the buffet was not hard to find beyond some trees, and there was an amusing incident near by to set every one laughing. It will be recalled that the weather man had predicted clear weather for the Taft inauguration, but that trainloads of patriots were snowbound on the outskirts of the city, which was the center of an unprecedented storm. Well, that same weather man had predicted rain for the night of that garden party, and while the unobscured moon vied with the searchlight in making bright the White House grounds, the weather wizard sat on the roof of the Cosmos Club, just over the way on Jackson Park, his troubled eyes longingly searching the skies for a cloud; any cloud, if no bigger than a man's hand.

[Another article of this series will appear next week.]

The City Under Paris

Continued from Preceding Page

caused it to be preserved, though the well has been dry for more than a century.

One day when they were tunneling the subway the widow was seated in her garden. Suddenly she heard voices underground; and after a time a man's head stuck out of the well. The unknown gazed round the garden, as if astonished. He called down the well to some companions, and finally two other men climbed slowly up and out.

"Pardon, madame," they said, "we are engineers of the subway. Do you know what you possess in that ancient well? A few feet below the surface there begins a winding stairway round its edges and an old iron hand rail. It leads seventy feet down to a section of the catacombs not on the map. The subway just grazes your well casing. We noticed its masonry and took out a few stones to explore it. The affair is curious. In old times your well led evidently to subterranean passages!"

The Paris Municipal Council knows nothing of this.

It has no idea to start tourists climbing down a well. It will probably be decided first to prepare a booklet describing the extraordinary facts—how a subterranean city exists deep under Paris and the part that it has played in history. Then they

will undertake extensive explorations, to open a virgin section of the catacombs to tourists.

It will probably be found close to the Baths of Cluny, present day remains of the palace of the Roman Governors, built A. D. 306. Eight hundred years later the old palace still stood, though dismantled. As late as A. D. 1180 Johan de Hauteville said of it:

"This palace of the old kings, whose summit rises to the skies and whose foundations attain down to the realms of the unknown!"

Another eight hundred years have passed since those words were written. Once there was a King of the Catacombs.

DUE to the heavy income tax and other excessive high costs of living in England treasures of art, literature, goldsmith and cabinet work are being sold by owners in whose families these precious things have been for many generations. Few persons realize how thoroughly Great Britain is being ransacked for old masters, porcelain, rare books, magnificent objects of every kind. Many of the treasures are coming to this country, but as by virtue of their age no duties are collected, a great deal of antique beauty receives no notoriety.

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—ST. LOUIS TIMES

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